

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 19, 2004

The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter,

We are writing to ask that when Congress returns in November, our committee hold hearings on whether or not U.S. troops in the field in Iraq are getting the equipment and protective gear they need.

Last December, the Commander of Combined Joint Task Force Seven, Army Lt. General Ricardo S. Sanchez wrote a letter to senior Army leadership stating that his supply of equipment was so poor that he would not be able to sustain combat operations "with rates this low." He specifically identified important systems with low readiness rates such as the M1 and Q-36/37 Radars as well as problems with fielding Interceptor Body Armor.

Last week, it was reported that soldiers from the 343<sup>rd</sup> Quartermaster Company failed to report to duty for a convoy mission across central Iraq. The soldiers are said to have been concerned about the safety of their trucks and the lack of an aviation escort. The trucks may have been missing parts and armor.

In a September survey of active duty military and their families, the Annenberg Public Policy Center reported widespread feelings of unpreparedness within the National Guard and Reserve. Forty-two percent of all respondents said that National Guard and Reservists were sent to Iraq without proper training and equipment, and 49 percent of family members agree with this assessment. Annenberg also polled nearly 2,500 Americans, 48 percent of whom believe the National Guard and Reservists had neither adequate training nor equipment.

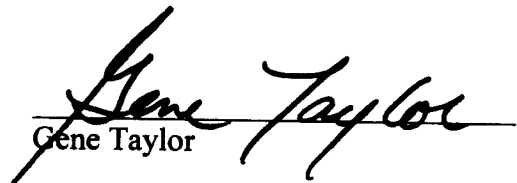
While we understand that the Department of Defense has taken steps to address equipment shortfalls, we are concerned that close to a year after the Sanchez letter, there are still shortages of vital, life-saving equipment urgently needed by our men and women in harm's way.


We ask that you hold a hearing as soon as possible to look at both incidents and the adequacy of the Pentagon's response including the new Joint Rapid Action Cell which is expected to work directly with combatant commanders to meet urgent materiel and logistics requirements.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

  
Ellen O. Tauscher

  
Gene Taylor

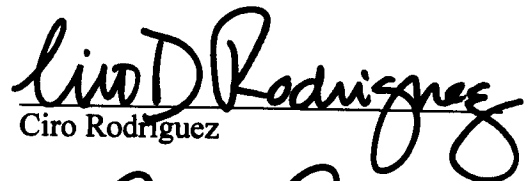
  
Lane Evans

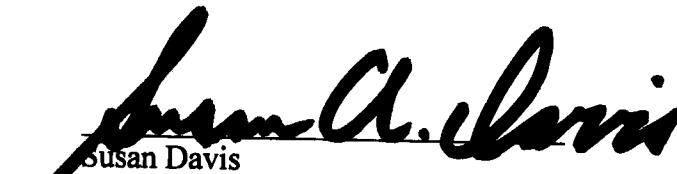
  
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